

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 HA-05
/105 W

-----020053 302110Z /10

R 300520Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9299
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 6127

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PGOV, AF
SUBJ: QUARTERLY POLITICAL REVIEW: VIOLENT REVOLUTION BRINGS
IN A NEW ORDER

1. SUMMARY: IN MANY IMPORTANT RESPECTS, THE VIOLENT CHANGE
OF GOVERNMENTS IN APRIL REPRESENTED A GENUINE REVOLUTION IN
AFGHAN TERMS. IF THE REGIME SURVIVES, AFGHANISTAN WILL BE SET
ON A NEW HISTORICAL PATH. THE NEW LEFTIST ORDER HAS PROMUL-
GATED REFORMS WHICH WOULD BREAK WITH MANY AFGHAN TRADITIONS,
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BUT WHICH IN SOME WAYS COULD BENEFIT THE AFGHAN PEOPLE. A
PERCEIVED THREAT THAT DAOUD WAS ABOUT TO DECAPITATE THE LEADER-
SHIP OF THE LEFTIST OPPOSITION AND DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE
UNFULFILLED PROMISES OF THE FORMER PRESIDENT WERE APPARENTLY
KEY REASONS WHY THE NEW LEADERSHIP EMBARKED UPON ITS REVOLU-
TIONARY COURSE. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE NEW REGIME
CAN DELIVER ON ITS OWN PROMISES TO CARRY OUT EFFECTIVE AND

EQUITABLE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL REFORMS.

2. SUPPORT FOR THE REGIME IS THIN, AND A NUMBER OF OPPOSITION GROUPS ARE REPORTEDLY FORMING. AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, KEY UNITS OF THE MILITARY SO FAR REMAIN LOYAL, AND THE GOVERNMENT IS IN CONTROL OF KABUL, OTHER MAJOR CITIES, AND MOST OF THE COUNTRYSIDE. FURTHERMORE, MOSCOW HAS GIVEN EVERY INDICATION THAT IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE THE SUPPORT NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE CONTINUATION OF A LEFTIST REGIME IN KABUL.

3. FOR SOME MONTHS TO COME, THE REGIME WILL PROBABLY BE PREOCCUPIED WITH CONSOLIDATING ITS POSITION, BUILDING POLITICAL SUPPORT THROUGH AN EXPANDED PARTY STRUCTURE, AND LAUNCHING ITS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS. FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, WILL LIKELY BE KEPT IN THE BACKGROUND FOR THE TIME BEING. END OF SUMMARY.

4. THE NATURE OF THE REVOLUTION: LEADERS OF THE INDIGENOUS LEFTIST MOVEMENT DESCRIBE THE EXPLOSIVE EVENTS OF APRIL 27-28 AS A GENUINE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION, CARRIED OUT WITH THE SUPPORT OF MILITARY ELEMENTS LOYAL TO THE REVOLUTIONARY CAUSE. THE ELIMINATION OF PRESIDENT DAOUD, HIS BROTHER MOHAMMAD NAIM, AND VIRTUALLY THEIR ENTIRE FAMILIES' APPEARS TO MARK THE END OF THE ROYAL FAMILY WHICH HAD GOVERNED THE COUNTRY FOR FIFTY YEARS, ALTHOUGH SOME MEMBERS SURVIVE IN EXILE ABROAD. THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY CABINET, WHICH INCLUDES CONFIDENTIAL

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GHILZAI PUSHTUNS, TAJIKS, UZBEKS, AND HAZARAS, REPRESENTS A BREAK IN THE 130-YEAR RULE BY MEMBERS OF THE MOHAMMADZAI PUSHTUN CLAN. ALTHOUGH THE NEW REGIME PROFESSES THAT THE COUP WAS UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT SOVIET INVOLVEMENT, SOME OBSERVERS SEE THE TAKEOVER BY A LEFTIST REGIME AS RESULTING IN A DRAMATIC SOUTHWARD EXPANSION OF RUSSIAN INFLUENCE, A STEP WHICH HAD BEEN RESISTED BY OTHER POWERS AND AFGHANS FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS.

5. THE ACTUAL TAKEOVER ON APRIL 27-28 WAS CARRIED OUT BY A VERY SMALL, WELL-ORGANIZED POLITICAL GROUP, INCLUDING A FEW WELL-PLACED AFGHAN MILITARY. ONLY AROUND SIXTY TANKS AND A FEW AIRCRAFT WERE NECESSARY TO OVERPOWER THE DAOUD REGIME, AND, ONCE THE FORMER PRESIDENT AND HIS CLOSE SUPPORTERS WERE ELIMINATED, THE MILITARY FORCES OUTSIDE KABUL QUICKLY SWITCHED TO THE REVOLUTIONARY SIDE.

6. THE PARTY WHICH SUCCESSFULLY BROUGHT OFF THE COUP, THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN (PDPA), APPEARS INDIGENOUS, DESPITE THE ADVANTAGES THE REVOLUTION BROUGHT TO THE USSR AND RUMORS OF SOVIET INVOLVEMENT. THE PARTY'S CLANDESTINE PENETRATION OF THE MILITARY AND ITS GENERAL ORGANIZA-

TIONAL EFFORTS OVER THE PAST THIRTEEN YEARS, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE YOUNGER MILITARY OFFICERS, PAID HANDSOME DIVIDENDS. ALTHOUGH THE REGIME MAY ULTIMATELY HAVE TO RELY ON SOVIET POWER TO MAINTAIN ITS POSITION, ITS ACCESSION WAS UNQUESTIONABLY THE RESULT OF AFGHAN EFFORTS.

7. EXPLANATION OF THE COUP: THE NEW REGIME'S EXPLANATION IS THAT THE DAOUD GOVERNMENT FAILED TO DELIVER THE REFORMS PROMISED FOLLOWING HIS OWN 1973 COUP, AND, IN FACT, PERPETUATED THE "DESPOTIC EXPLOITATION" OF THE FORMER NADER DYNASTY. FURTHERMORE, ACCORDING TO CHAIRMAN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, NOOR MOHAMMAD TARAKI, DAOUD'S REFORMS -- E.G., A NEW CONSTITUTION, THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTY, THE PROMISE OF AN ELECTED PARLIAMENT BY THE END OF 1979 -- WERE AIMED NOT AT

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BROADENING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, BUT AT CODIFYING A SYSTEM OF ONE-MAN AND ONE-FAMILY DICTATORSHIP.

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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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8. THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S THESIS HAS SOME HISTORICAL VALIDITY. FOLLOWING DAOUD'S 1973 TAKEOVER, HIGH EXPECTATIONS REGARDING REFORMS WERE RAISED AMONG MANY AFGHANS, BUT THESE GRADUALLY DISSIPATED AS THE ECONOMY LANGUISHED, POLITICAL PARTICIPATION NEVER MATERIALIZED, AND, IN GENERAL, PROGRESS BECAME STALLED. THIS DISILLUSIONMENT BECAME PRONOUNCED DURING DAOUD'S LAST YEAR, DURING WHICH PERIOD THE NEW LEADERSHIP CONTENTS IT DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TOWARD ORGANIZING THE COUP. THE FACT THAT DAOUD TOOK NO GIGNIFICANT STEPS TO DEFUSE POPULAR FRUSTRATIONS, NOR EVEN TO GUARANTEE THE REGIME'S OWN SECURITY, DEMONSTRATED
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THAT GOVERNMENT'S FATAL OVERCONFIDENCE AND ITS LACK OF TOUCH WITH THE REALITY OF THE TIMES.

9. THE FORMATION OF A LEFTIST ELEMENT IN A BACKWARD SOCIETY LIKE AFGHANISTAN'S WAS NOT SURPRISING. THE FORMER MOHAMMADZAI OLIGARCHY REPRESENTED AN EXCLUSIVE CLUB WHICH NEVER OPENED ITS DOORS TO OUTSIDERS LIKE TARAKI, BABRAK KARMAL, AND OTHER LEFTIST LEADERS. THE RADICAL RIGHT, NOT SURPRISINGLY, HELD LITTLE OR NO ATTRACTION FOR THESE MEN, SINCE, IN AFGHANISTAN, THE RIGHT REPRESENTED EXTREMELY CONSERVATIVE VIEWS GENERALLY BASED ON ISLAM AND ON MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO. THUS, THOSE AFGHANS VERY IMPATIENT WITH THE LACK OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS IN THEIR COUNTRY WERE ATTRACTED TO SOCIALIST OR MARXIST MODELS AS THE WAY TO MODERNIZE THEIR COUNTRY.

10. TARAKI HAS REPEATEDLY STATED THAT THE LEFT WELCOMED DAOUD'S OWN COUP IN 1973 AND ITS PROMISED REFORMS, AND FOR A TIME EVEN SUPPORTED THAT REGIME. THE LEFT'S SUBSEQUENT SENSE OF BETRAYAL, HE HAS EXPLAINED, ONLY HARDENED ITS DETERMINATION TO ACT, AND THE INEPTITUDE OF DAOUD PAVED THE WAY FOR THE APRIL REVOLUTION.

11. ACTIONS OF THE NEW REGIME: DESPITE THE NARROWNESS OF THE REGIME'S SUPPORT, WHICH HAS REQUIRED IT TO CONCENTRATE ON CONSOLIDATING ITS OWN SECURITY, THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN (DRA) HAS PROMULGATED AN OVERALL DOMESTIC AND EXTERNAL PLAN (THE "THIRTY POINTS" SET FORTH IN TARAKI'S MAY 9 SPEECH, (KABUL 3806), INITIATED SEVERAL POPULAR REFORMS (AS WELL AS SOME LESS POPULAR ONES), WEATHERED A BLOODLESS INTRA-PARTY STRUGGLE FOR POWER, AND EMBARKED UPON SOME PROGRAMS WHICH THEORETICALLY COULD RESULT IN AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE

STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE COUNTRY'S MASSES.

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12. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHAT THE REGIME HAS NOT DONE IS PACIFY THE COUNTRYSIDE, BROADEN THE GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE SOCIETY, OR REVIVE A LANGUISHING ECONOMY. FURTHERMORE, THE REGIME'S CLOSE TIES WITH THE SOVIETS AND ITS LEFTIST CHARACTER HAVE ALIENATED MANY AFGHANS. THESE SHORTCOMINGS ARE FORMIDABLE OBSTACLES, AND AT THIS STAGE IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT COUNTERCOUP EFFORTS WILL BE ATTEMPTED BY ONE GROUP OR ANOTHER.

13. PRIORITIES OF THE NEW REGIME: CONSOLIDATION OF THE REGIME'S SECURITY REMAINS ITS TOP PRIORITY, AND WILL PROBABLY BE SO FOR MONTHS TO COME. REPORTS CIRCULATE OF THE FORMATION OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN-BASED RESISTANCE GROUPS, AND TARAKI AND FOREIGN MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN HAVE ALLUDED TO SUCH RESISTANCE IN THEIR PUBLIC SPEECHES. THE TARAKI REGIME IS NOT OVERLY POPULAR AMONG THE MASSES, BUT THIS MAY NOT MEAN MUCH IF KABUL AND, PERHAPS, THE FEW OTHER MAJOR CITIES ARE QUIESCENT OR UNDER FIRM CONTROL.

14. ALTHOUGH THE REVOLUTION ITSELF AND SEVERAL OF THE REGIME'S SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS HAVE ALARMED AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORS, THE LEADERSHIP IS PROBABLY SO PREOCCUPIED WITH INTERNAL AFFAIRS, INCLUDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS REFORM PROGRAMS, THAT ITS INVOLVEMENT IN FOREIGN POLICY WILL, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, REMAIN IN THE BACKGROUND OVER THE NEAR FUTURE. NEVERTHELESS, THE EVOLUTION OF CLOSER TIES WITH MOSCOW WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE, BUT, SIMULTANEOUSLY, TARAKI WILL MOST LIKELY UNDERTAKE TO REGULARIZE IN SOME WAY HIS RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING WITH THOSE WHO HAVE EXTENDED OFFERS OF ECONOMIC AND OTHER ASSISTANCE. IN THIS LATTER RESPECT, THIS REVOLUTIONARY REGIME WILL NOT BE MATERIALLY DIFFERENT FROM ITS PREDECESSORS, ALTHOUGH MOST WESTERN OBSERVERS POSSESS SERIOUS RESERVATIONS REGARDING THIS GOVERNMENT'S NONALIGNED CREDENTIALS, AS WELL AS ITS ULTIMATE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, GOVERNMENT REFORM, POLITICAL SITUATION, PROGRESS REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KABUL06127
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780312-0792
Format: TEL
From: KABUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978075/aaaaadxv.tel
Line Count: 266
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c8dcf071-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1977120
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: QUARTERLY POLITICAL REVIEW: VIOLENT REVOLUTION BRINGS IN A NEW ORDER
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PGOV, AF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c8dcf071-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014